

Biography - Lesa L. Donnelly

Lesla Donnelly lives in Anderson, California. She is a California native. She worked for USDA, Forest Service, in California (Region 5) in administrative and collateral fire positions from 1978 to 2002, retiring in 2002 under a settlement agreement.

Lesla currently works as a paralegal, representing Federal employees in civil rights matters and federal employment matters for twenty years. She and her brother, Robert Donnelly founded Donnelly and Donnelly Alternative Dispute Resolutions and have represented federal employees at USDA, DOI, USPS, the VA, Homeland Security, and CAL Fire in EEOC and MSPB cases.

While working for the US Forest Service, Lesla filed a sex discrimination class action lawsuit in 1995 (*Donnelly v. Glickman*; *Donnelly v. Veneman*) on behalf of 6000 Forest Service women in California. The claims were sexual harassment, hostile work environment and reprisal. The federal court certified the class in 1996. The Federal Court approved a Consent Decree in 2000 that provided injunctive relief and individual settlements to class members. The Federal Court appointed Lesla as a Monitor for oversight and implementation of the "Donnelly Settlement Agreement." The Consent Decree ended in 2006.

Since 1998 Lesla has been Vice President of the USDA Coalition of Minority Employees and the Women's Issues advisor to Coalition Presidents Ron Cotton and Lawrence Lucas. The Coalition addresses civil rights issues that affect USDA employees by working with agency officials, congress, the White House, other civil rights organizations, and the media. Since 1998 Lesla has worked on civil rights policy issues with the House and Senate, meeting with political officials such as Charles Grassley, Tom Harkin, Darrell Issa, Maxine Waters, Barbara Boxer, Elijah Cummings, Mike Honda, John Lewis, Patsy Mink, Ron Wyden, Nancy Pelosi, John McCain, Adolphus Towns, Rand Paul, John Conyers, Sheila Jackson-Lee, and more.

In 2008, Lesla testified before the House Sub Committee on Government Oversight and Reform on sexual harassment and workplace violence against federally employed women. She has been invited to the White House three times to discuss civil rights issues.

Lesla currently represents a class action complaint filed in August 2014, on behalf of USDA, Forest Service female firefighters in Region 5, California. There are eight class agents representing the north, central and southern forests of California.

Lesla has participated in civil rights panel discussions in conjunction with the USDA Coalition of Minority Employees, the NAAPC, The Coalition 4 Change, the Blacks in Government Conference, No FEAR, and the National Whistleblowers Conference, to name a few. She has had interviews published in the New York Times, Washington Post, San Francisco Chronicle, Huffington Post, Sacramento Bee, L.A. Times, USA Today, the Associated Press, Reuters, CNN, National Public Radio, Pacifica Radio, and other national/local news, radio and TV media.